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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

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1. [REDACTED] of an unde[REDACTED] an enterprise of the Ministry for the Food Processing Industry. The disease occurred in the Kreise Meissen, Chemnitz and Rostock. The fact that the diseased animals were conveyed to the slaughter houses instead of to the disposal yards, was held responsible for the new epidemic focus in the Rostock area. No new countermeasures, neither prophylactic nor therapeutic, were developed.
2. In late February, a Berlin veterinary bacteriologist stated that officially no rinderpest of viral origin was recognized. In the summer of 1954, numerous cases of a septicemic cattle disease were reported allegedly caused by a bacillus of the genus pasteurilla, which has a certain resemblance to human plague bacillus.
3. In early April, a farm foreman of LPG Greypaul, Kreis Merseburg, stated that rinderpest broke out in this Kreis in January 1955. The [REDACTED] stated the following symptoms: emaciation, boils covering the entire body, partly with a serous discharge, shedding of the hair, and constant painful lowing. Since January 1955, 80 percent of the cattle of the LPG enterprise died, 40 percent in the stables. The infected animals were brought one by one to the Merseburg disposal yard. Other farm workers reported on a similarly high incidence of the disease in other farmsteads of the Merseburg Kreis. The designation "rinderpest" was not used.
4. In early April 1955, a farmer from Oelzschau near Espenhain, Borna Kreis, reported that rinderpest broke out in Kreis Borna in mid-January and that 7,000 animals had to be killed as an emergency measure by order of the police authorities. Nevertheless about 30 percent of the cattle died in the stables. The diseased animals showed the following symptoms: constant watering of the eyes, stoppage of the milk and rapid emaciation. The veterinarians referred to a gastrointestinal condition caused by red binding twine.

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The insurance companies did not pay any damages prior to early April. The government is making efforts to ease the tensions among the population by providing damages.

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5. In mid-March 1955, a farmer from Stollberg-Mitteldorf, Stollberg Kreis in the Erzgebirge Mts, reported that rinderpest had made its appearance in Pfaffenhain and Hemersdorf near Ginzdorf around Christmas 1954. One of the farmers lost 22 of his 23 animals. The infected animals were slaughtered shortly before perishing. The following symptoms were noted: loss of appetite, stoppage of the milk, diarrhea. Meat imports were held responsible for the transmission of the disease. The farmers disbelieved this explanation and attributed inadequate feeding for having caused the disease. Rotten shredded rape was also alleged to be the cause of the diarrhea. The affected farms were placed under quarantine. From Chemnitz-Hilmsdorf, the onset of the epidemic was reported around Christmas 1954. The entire cattle stock had to be slaughtered and the meat was released for human consumption.
6. In mid-March 1955, a farmer from Breunsdorf in Kreis Borna reported on the rapid spread of a hitherto unknown disease in the Kreise of Borna and Altenburg since January 1955. The use of the designation "rinderpest" was forbidden officially. The following symptoms were noted: watering of the eyes, stoppage of the milk, dark spots in the region of the neck, rapid emaciation, and heavy diarrhea. The animals succumbed within 2 to 4 days. Pregnant animals aborted and mostly still-born calves were produced. Every affected farm was quarantined, the dung water was disinfected with chlorine, and a lavatory with a disinfecting solution was placed at the entrance to the farm. The insurance companies paid damages only when at least 20 percent of the cattle stock had been destroyed by the disease. If the losses were less than 20 percent, damages were paid for 2 hundredweights for a mean weight of 8 hundredweights of a living animal. From the very beginning, the district veterinarian diagnosed the disease as rinderpest against which "there is no remedy". For this reason, he was discharged and put on trial. Several farmers held a binding twine responsible which was in use in 1954 and is said to have been coated with a kind of red wax. [REDACTED] Meat imported from abroad, including ground meat and bone flour were held responsible. [REDACTED] the term "rinderpest" was prohibited by the government in an attempt to avoid getting entangled in the International Sanitary Regulations.
7. In early March, a farmer from Podelzig, Kreis Seelow, was informed that rinderpest was involved in the disease having made its appearance in several villages located between Fuerstenwalde and Seelow. Polish serum was made available but proved ineffective. Veterinarians were strictly ordered not to disclose any details.
8. In early March, it was reported that rinderpest had been on the agenda of a meeting of the agricultural committee of the Demokratische Bauernpartei (democratic farmers party) of the Leipzig district. Dr Christoph (fnu) of the Leipzig Institute of Bacteriology elaborated on this topic in connection with the outbreak of a cattle disease at a people's-owned farm. He stated that no epidemic disease was involved although the entire cattle stock was affected. He alleged that the disease was possibly imported [REDACTED]
9. In early March, a farmer from Bruegge, Kreis Pritzwalk, reported that at a district meeting in late February the Bruegge Buergermeister mentioned two cases of rinderpest in LPG enterprises.
10. In early March 1955, a Fuerstenwalde/Spree veterinarian reported that a colleague had furnished him with continuing reports on the incidence of an epidemic cattle disease in Saxony. The following UNCODEDs were mentioned: initial intestinal inflammation, inflammation and swelling of the [REDACTED] and conjunctivitis, slowly progressing septicemia. Both veterinarians did not believe that rinderpest was involved in view of the low mortality rate. The authorities are trying to keep the whole affair secret and contend that the disease was imported from the USA. Likewise meat imports from Eastern Bloc countries are held responsible. Investigations were carried out quite unsatisfactorily since slaughtered cattle are imported devoid of their inner organs, which are indispensable for establishing a diagnosis.

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11. In early March, a farmer from Steina, Kreis Doebein, reported that the district veterinarian had announced the incidence of several cases of rinderpest in Wendishain near Doebein since the summer of 1954. Of one herd of 20 pedigree animals, all had to be killed.
12. In mid-March, it was learned from Zwenkau near Leipzig, that all 15 animals of a Zwenkau farmer fell victim to a cattle disease during the period between Christmas and New Year 1954. The veterinarian did not disclose the cause of the disease. The farmers adhered to the belief that the disease had been imported by Soviet meat deliveries.
13. In mid-March, it was learned at the Chemnitz-Hartau OelB, that 10 out of 16 animals at the enterprise contracted rinderpest and two of them died. During the same period, 12 out of 34 animals of a Hartau farmer fell victim to rinderpest. At the Jugendwerkdorf (youth farming enterprise) of the city of Chemnitz, 28 out of 100 animals died. A Klaffenbach farmer lost 2 of his 30 animals. Another farmer in Chemnitz-Altdorf suffered the total loss of his livestock. The same happened to two small farmers in Alt-Chemnitz and another farmer at Chemnitz-Altenhain. The official version was that the disease was caused by binding twine. The farmers themselves believed that rinderpest was involved.
14. In mid-March 1955, it was learned from a farmer in Damshagen, Kreis Grevesmuehlen, that a hitherto unknown cattle disease had made its appearance in Hohenschoenberg, north of Damshagen. The animals showed temperatures and constipation followed by diarrhea and emaciation. The animals had to be slaughtered. The condition showed a resemblance to the so-called catarrhal fever known in Pomerania. The disinfection measures prescribed were those used in case of hoof-and-mouth disease.
15. In mid-January 1955, it was learned from Neubrandenburg that a cattle disease of unknown origin was spreading in the Kreise of Templin, Strasburg, Ueckermunde and Neustrelitz. Sabotage was suspected. In mid-February, there was a considerable rise in the morbidity rate and large herds either succumbed to intestinal inflammation or had to be slaughtered. Abortions were also a common feature. Reports by the SED district management for the first time mentioned the term rinderpest. In LPG Drense, Kreis Malchin, 36 out of 45 animals had to be slaughtered and 9 died. In LPG Schalkendorf, Kreis Malchin, 100 out of a total number of 173 animals had to be slaughtered and 73 died. Investigations were ordered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to be carried out in the Neubrandenburg District. Inoculations proved ineffective.
16. On 1 March 1955, the outbreak of rinderpest in February was reported from LPG Tietzow near Nauen. By 28 February 1955, 15 animals had died.
17. Rinderpest has been reported from Altruppin near Neuruppin since late November 1954. The affected farms are quarantined and inoculations are performed. Disinfection zones are established at the village entrances and the farm entrances. Churches and cinemas were closed until January 1955.
18. In late February 1955, a Neuruppin butcher reported considerable decrease in the meat supply caused by hog pest. Considerable losses in livestock in Dabergotz south of Neuruppin were said to have been caused by rinderpest. Investigations are under way and meat specimens were sent to Berlin for investigation.
19. In mid-February, 46 animals at a farm at Ristedt near Oebisfelde succumbed to the disease. It was learned that two Soviet scientists from Moscow came to investigate the carcasses. East German scientists were also present. The origin of the disease was not disclosed. While some of the scientists held rinderpest responsible, this concept was disproved by the others.

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[REDACTED] 20. In late March 1955, it was learned from a confidential veterinary report containing statistical data that some 100,000 animals fell victim to rinderpest in the GDR prior to 28 March 1955. In Kreis Doebein it was the best stables that were affected. In Marbach, 55 animals from two different stables were reported dead, in Wendishain 42 animals succumbed within one week, in Reichenbach 7, in Knobelsdorf 16, and 13 in the adjoining Kreis Rochlitz in the locality of Schweikers-hain. The veterinarian stated that no area of the GDR remained uninfested.

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21. After the outbreak of rinderpest in the autumn of 1954, official investigations were put into action to trace the origin of the disease. The official version stated that a specific binding twine had caused the condition. This binding twine was said to have been soaked in some kind of paraffin. According to unofficial statements, malnutrition was to be held responsible. A 10 cm high layer of sawdust soaked with carbolic acid to be placed at the entrance to the stable was recommended as the only control measure. According to the veterinarian mentioned in paragraph 20, it has so far not been possible to control the disease.

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